

Senator McElveen – I know from speaking with Senator Leventis and reading newspaper articles that Senator Leventis, Senator Johnson, and you are making every reasonable effort to bring to light for public and government debate and consideration the situation, risks, and needs associated with the Pinewood Site.

I just about two weeks ago with Mike Burns, a Representative to the South Carolina Legislature from the Greenville area. I chanced to ask him whether a hearing had been scheduled on the Pinewood Site. As I did with all South Carolina Senators and Representatives – and Governor Haley - I had provided Mr. Burns with web links to the full set of documents submitted from July 18, 2014 through October 31, 2014 by Kestrel Horizons, LLC as Trustee, and from November 1, 2014 through January 25, 2015 by me as a citizen of South Carolina.

Mr. Burns told me that no hearings on the Pinewood Site would be scheduled until after May 1, 2015 – the so called “crossover date” after which no bill could be introduced and passed by the date of termination of the 2015 legislative session – except as an emergency measure. I informed Mr. Burns that the legislature needed to pass a bill or some sort of authorization – as required by law – to provide access to Permitted Sites Fund - now estimated at \$22 million, I believe – in order to insure timely preventative and remedial measures could be put in place at the site.

The Permitted Sites Fund was established and funded by a use tax paid by customers of all commercial hazardous waste sites in South Carolina and is earmarked for “a hazardous waste landfill in South Carolina (aka “The Pinewood Site”)”. The state law that established and governs the Fund requires the approval of the South Carolina Legislature to access the Fund. If the legislature does not approve access to the Permitted Sites Fund, funding for preventative and remedial action could well be delayed for more than a year. In that time, costs to prevent and mitigate risks might rise by millions of dollars – or tens of millions of dollars.

I was taken aback and disappointed by the following sentences in the Post and Courier article last week: **“It is reassuring that the site's current trustee, Charleston lawyer Ben Hagood, says the site is being properly maintained and monitored. "There is no urgent environmental problem out there today," the former S.C. House member said Tuesday.”** First, I believe Mr. Hagood should know better than to make such a blanket statement, given the information Kestrel Horizons, LLC, as Trustee of the Pinewood Site Custodial Trust for nearly eleven years, has provided.

Second, I am concerned that Mr. Hagood is being coopted by DHEC management and South Carolina political forces, just the way DHEC management (and apparently some top South Carolina elected officials) attempted to coopt Kestrel Horizons and its employees into submitting permit applications which would have omitted critical information and deliberately and illegally whitewashed the gravity of the Pinewood Site situation, risks, and immediate needs. Those folks desire and expect the Trustee to behave as their version of ***Bagdad Bob*** of Desert Storm fame. Ben Hagood and Rob Kerr know better than that and are better than that.

I will not try to reiterate, summarize, or litigate here the facts, myths, lies, risks, needs, and harsh realities of the Pinewood Site. I will, instead, offer to provide a presentation and participate in question and answer sessions at meetings to be held outside of the government processes so susceptible to manipulation, spin, politics, and fear. I will need about an hour to present the facts. A PowerPoint presentation with handouts will insure the important topics are covered.

I will not participate in political debates. This is not about politics – it is about telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth – and doing the right thing. Though the effect of taking the oath is largely symbolic for a non-sanctioned meeting, I will request to be sworn in before each meeting. Hopefully DHEC employees, Trustees, politicians, and citizens will be sworn in as a requirement of appearing before government bodies regarding the Pinewood Site in the future.

I can be ready within a week of your request.

Thanks, Bill Stephens

About **Bagdad Bob**: Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf (Arabic: محمد سعيد الصحاف *Muḥammad Sa'īd Al-Ṣaḥḥāf*, born 1940) is a former [Iraqi diplomat](#) and [politician](#). He came to wide prominence around the world during the [2003 invasion of Iraq](#), during which he was the [Iraqi Information Minister](#) under Iraqi president [Saddam Hussein](#), acting as the spokesperson for the [Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party](#) and Saddam's regime.

He is best known for his grandiose and grossly unrealistic [propaganda](#) broadcasts before and during the war, extolling the invincibility of the [Iraqi Army](#) and the permanence of Saddam's rule. His announcements were intended for an Iraqi domestic audience subject to Saddam's [cult of personality](#) and total [state censorship](#), and were met with widespread derision and amusement by Western nationals and others with access to up-to-date information from international media organizations. In the US he was popularly known as **Baghdad Bob**, in the UK as **Comical Ali**, and in Italy as **Ali il Comico**.

His pronouncements included claims that American soldiers were committing suicide "by the hundreds" outside the city, and denial that there were any American tanks in Baghdad, when in fact they were only several hundred meters away from the press conference where he was speaking and the combat sounds of the nearing American troops could already be heard in the background of the broadcast. His last public appearance as Information Minister was on April 8, 2003, when he said that the Americans "are going to surrender or be burned in their tanks. They will surrender, it is they who will surrender".